

February 17, 2017

TO: Sen. Chris Rosario, Subcommittee Chair
Sen. Gayle Slossberg, Subcommittee Chairwomen
Re: Youth Service Bureau Budget
FROM: Robert Morton, Director

As Director of the West Haven Youth and Family Service I am writing to express my concern over the proposed budget cuts that the Governor has outlined for Youth Service Bureau's in his proposed budget and the proposed competitive pool process.

Youth Service Bureau's across the state work hand in hand with Public Schools, Police Departments, Mental Health facilities and other service providers to ensure children with mental and behavioral health problems are given every opportunity to have their problems addressed so they can succeed in school and avoid involvement in the juvenile justice system whenever possible.

I know our staff and the staff of other YSB's are very involved in our communities and are very aware of the resources that can be brought to bear to help struggling children and families. I think it is critically important that programs that we provide continue as we are normally the first responders in our communities when children and families are in crisis. Our ability to work quickly, efficiently and fiscally with children and families is, I feel unmatched across the state. Keeping services locally based and being deeply involved in our local community is a YSB priority that guarantees quality services are always available.

It is time again for us to ask you to reignite the advocacy efforts on behalf of YSBs. Let the Governor and your fellow Legislator's know that we have already suffered cuts and that further cuts would result for some YSBs in the elimination of vital programs and services and in others would result in the closure of the YSB.

In West Haven, these cuts would have a serious effect on our therapy programs, parent support groups for children with special needs, child care services for these families, after school and summer activities for children with special needs and a reduction of staff support for these programs

I strongly urge you to speak with your colleagues and the Governor to reconsider this decision to make these drastic cuts in the Youth Service Bureau budget line item and that you not support the competitive pool proposal.

Thank you.